

U. S. Ends Combat Pay To Anti-Castro Troops

By Dom Bonafede

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MIAMI, Fla., July 30—The United States Government has cut off combat pay to the anti-Castro military corps.

Washington's decision was confirmed here by Marshall Wise, director of the Cuban Refugee Emergency Center.

He said the exile troops can now receive monthly welfare checks from his office like other refugees, if they apply.

"Our department has made arrangements to give each man \$100 to carry him over for the month of August," Wise commented. The checks, issued by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, were put in the mail Friday.

Wise said he did not know what branch of the United States Government had been previously paying the anti-Castro soldiers. But it is generally known they were being financed by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Official disclosure today that CIA funds were being halted marks the first time that the Government has officially acknowledged its financial backing of the rebel troops. Earlier, it had been unofficially conceded that the United States participated in the training of anti-Castro military forces and had planned and directed the abortive Cuban invasion last April 17.

Following the invasion, the United States had refused to recognize the troops who did participate in the operation.

were recalled from bases in Guatemala, Louisiana and Florida. Since then, most have been living as civilians in the Miami area but were still on the U. S. military payroll.

The halt in fighting pay occurred almost simultaneously with an announcement by the Defense Department that Cuban refugees will be accepted into the U. S. armed forces. It is certain that many rebel soldiers will now switch to one of the U. S. military branches.

The breakup of anti-Castro garrisons indicates that the United States and the anti-Castro exile organizations have abandoned any idea for a second invasion of Cuba in the foreseeable future.

Wise said that each of the fighting exiles was notified by the Government about 10 days ago that their stipend would be discontinued. The action caused a stir among the rebels because the notices were unsigned and on plain paper.

The furore subsided after explanations were released by Wise's office.

Wise said he did not know how many troops had been receiving fighting pay. He added, however, that the men had been told to sign up for welfare aid according to alphabetic order over a period of 20 days. Since 65 or so were scheduled each day, it is estimated 1300 had been on the military payroll.

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